

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY112
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Happy Days
-------------------------	------------

Address of Service:	Ballyporeen Childcare Comm Ltd, Ballyporeen Childcare Centre, Ballyporeen, Cahir, Co Tipperary
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	E21 VH36
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Patrick Clancy
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	06/07/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM	57
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and D Prendergast
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Happy Days is a community based early years service registered for full day, part time and sessional care. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey detached building that is located in the village of Ballyporeen in Tipperary. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years, with the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) operating from 8:45 to 11:45. A school age care service is also available. The registered opening times are between 07:30 and 18:00 but the service currently operates from 07:45 to 17:00 Monday to Friday. The service operates from two floors, with one care room and sanitary facilities upstairs and six care rooms downstairs, one of which is used for school age care. A kitchen, an office, three sleep rooms and sanitary facilities are also available downstairs. The children have access to a large all weather outdoor play area located to the rear and side of the premises. Each care room downstairs have direct access to a covered outdoor play space. An additional enclosed large grass area is available to the children.

Staffing

There are 29 adults attached to the service, including the register provider, who is not service based. On the day of inspection, 22 were present in the service, including the person in charge, the deputy, the chef, the caretaker and one school age care staff member. Seventeen staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. A student was also present on a work placement.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, person in charge and staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputies were also in place. This information was displayed in the main entrance area.
- (b) Both the manager and the assistant manager were working at the setting when the inspection commenced. At least one of these adults was available throughout the inspection process. Review of the staff roster demonstrated that a person in charge was on site throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that two staff files had not been reviewed previously and that eight staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Seven of these adults worked directly with the early years children. On the day of inspection, a student was also present on an educational work placement programme. A total of 11 files were assessed. In addition, Garda vetting for 11 adults, whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal, was requested for review.
- (a) There were 16 written and validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) Six references had been provided by sources other than previous employers and had been validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 11 adults. However, in relation to two adults whose Garda vetting was due for renewal; the service did not adhere to the re- vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) A recognised award in early childhood care and education was held by four of the seven adults who were employed to work directly with the early years children. Two of the adults held letters of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (2)
- (d) While it was acknowledged that police vetting was available for the two adults who had resided outside the State, while over the age of 18, these police vetting records had not been translated into English, by a reputable source of translation.
- (4) Evidence was unavailable to demonstrate that one of the adults had attained a minimum level 5 award in early childhood care and education.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) A professional translation company translated these documents into English. The service has changed their process of recruitment to include this step in the vetting process. The service policy is updated to reflect this.

(4) The educator had submitted an application to the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) for a letter of recognition of qualifications. The staff member is currently assigned to work in school age care until clarification of qualification is received. The service will ensure all certs are on file before commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) (d) Both original documents and their English translations were received, and a copy of the recruitment policy.
- (4) Evidence of emails to the DCDE and college of the application to the DCDE was received. Email also received from the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2) (d) and 9(4).

Part III – Management and Staff

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The service maintained the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care rooms. The ratio was as follows:

- The Senior Preschool room, there were 3 staff members caring for 10 children in the morning and 2 staff members caring for 12 children in the afternoon who were aged between 4 years and 5 years and 5 months.
- The Junior Preschool room, there was 2 staff members caring for 15 children in the morning and 3 staff members caring for 15 children in the afternoon who were aged between 3 years and 4 years and 6 months.
- The Baby room, there was three staff members caring for seven children in the morning and two staff members caring for seven children in the afternoon who were aged between 1 year and 1 year and 6 months.
- The Wobbler 1 room, there was three staff members caring for five children in the morning and two staff members caring for seven children in the afternoon who were aged between 1 year and 1 year and 9 months.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The Wobbler 2 room, there was three staff members caring for seven children in the morning and two staff members caring for seven children in the afternoon who were aged between 2 years and 2 years and 6 months.
- The Toddler room, there was three staff members caring for eight children in the morning and two staff members caring for nine children in the afternoon who were aged between 2 years and 2 years and 11 months.
- The Afterschool room was in use on the day of inspection.

(8) (a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (j) A sample of 10 administration of medication forms were reviewed, of these, all were fully completed with the staff member, witness and parent/guardian signatures. One child had been observed to be prescribed emergency medication which had not been administered.
- (k) A sample of 10 accident/incident forms were reviewed; these were found to contain all of the particulars required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child,

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- All food and snacks were provided by the service, and these were observed to be healthy and nutritious. A menu was observed to be posted on the wall in the Baby room outlining the variety of menu options for the week.
- Children were observed eating a hot meal which consisted of chicken curry with mixed vegetables and rice and snacks of strawberries, blueberries, oranges, apples cucumber and cut up grapes. Additional servings of food were available to the children if they wished. The younger children were observed to wear bibs.
- Cutlery and crockery were available in each of the care rooms and one child was observed laying out the plates in the Wobbler 1 room.
- Staff interacted with the children during snack time and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary. Children in the baby room were encouraged to self-feed and the children in the Wobbler rooms were observed to self-serve the food.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day and children in the Wobbler 1 room were observed to be offered a choice of milk or water to drink with their hot meals.
- A relaxed unhurried atmosphere was evident at snack time, as the children and staff in the Toddler room were observed to interact with one another. At dinner time, the children in the Baby room were observed sitting at the table while one staff member sang with the children while they waited.
- On the day of inspection, all the downstairs care rooms had free access to play outside as the doors remained opened throughout the inspection. Each downstairs room had an enclosed outdoor area accessible to each care room.
- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately with hats and had suncream applied. Children visibly appeared to be enjoying the free access to outdoors.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care rooms, and this was seen to carry through from the Baby room to the pre-school rooms. Examples of this were when children put on their shoes, washed their hands, laid tables, cleaned up after food and selected a daily task to complete.
- Each of the care rooms and outdoor areas were well resourced to cater for a variety of age-appropriate activities. Examples of toy items available were books, dolls, prams, dinosaurs, magnetic bricks, musical instruments and a selection of sensory toys. The outdoor area contained a large amount of play material such as water and sand play, kitchens, ride on bikes and cars, climbing areas, swings and slide. An additional large outdoor area was available called Tubby land, an enclosed grass area with a marquee, swings, tunnels, a boat and a polytunnel with a variety of vegetables growing.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected with one child being changed at a time. Supervision and assistance were provided for the children who accessed the sanitary facilities.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of either a couch, mat or cushions in the care rooms. A carpet area was also available in the Baby room. There was a quiet area in each of the care rooms that were equipped with age-appropriate books to read and the children's learning journals.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed to promote children's personal choices in all the care rooms showing positive regard for the children wishes on the day of inspection. The children were encouraged with decision making and praised during tasks in a warm and caring manner, for example when children played with magnetic bricks, musical instruments and danced.
- The children appeared focused and engaged when working with the various materials and activities available to them. Their participation was guided by the adults, who interacted with the children in a calm and patient manner. For example, when the staff were observed to sit with the children at their level and interact with them about topics of interests led by the child. This was observed when staff interacted with children during dinosaur play and playing wall mounted musical instruments in the Baby room.
- Staff were observed to partake in a group activity of reading books that were selected by the children and guided children through moulding clay activities to craft items of their own choosing.
- The care rooms displayed materials and resources at children's level which they could freely access. Children were observed to choose what to play with. Children were also given a choice in the preschool rooms to select

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

a task for the day by assigning their photo to their chosen task which promoted independence and decision making.

- Parents or guardians were communicated with at pick up and drop off and with phone contact. The communication between staff and parents was observed on the day of inspection. A learning journal was kept by a key worker for each child in the service. Each child had an individual learning plan developed with parental involvement and children's learning was logged by staff in the journal. Parents were encouraged to partake in the individual learning plan and meetings were held with parents around the learning plan to ensure it is meeting the individual child's needs and to identify needs and goals.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care rooms at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- The inspector observed an upset child in the Baby room to be comforted by a staff member who responded positively to the child. In the Preschool room, staff effectively supported children encouraging them to discuss out minor disagreements.
- Family photos and birthday calendars for the children were displayed on the walls in the care room. The younger children had a family photo book each, which staff were observed to look through with them encouraging self-recognition and a sense of belonging and identity.
- The staff encouraged independence and development through group work in carpentry, gardening, sewing, weaving and cooking. Each child is encouraged to partake from a young age and skills are developed over time.
- The food grown in the service is prepared by the children with guidance and used for cooking and snacks. The children bake with the assistance of the chef and use tools with the assistance of the caretaker and staff.
- On the day of inspection staff were observed to be supportive to parents and the children as new children were transitioning into the service and other children were transitioning between the care rooms. Children who had transferred to another care room showed familiarity and comfort with the staff in their new care room.
- Room meetings between staff were held on a weekly basis, mentoring meetings were held on a monthly basis and service meetings were held every three months.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General safety:

- The entrance to the service was through the main entrance door or an entrance gate at the side of the building, both were secured with a control buzzer. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children enclosed in concrete walls with metal gates. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The windows were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children in the care rooms.
- Safety clips were in place to secure blind cords.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children, and they were observed to wash their hands before eating, after using the sanitary facilities and after a nappy change. Individual cloths were given to the younger children to clean their face and hands and were washed after each use.
- Staff cleaned the tables and swept the floors on a regular basis after snack and lunch time.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground on hooks.
- A refrigerator was accessible to each care room and was used for the storage of perishable foods. On the day of inspection, perishable items were stored in the fridge for snack time.
- During nappy changing processes observed, staff ensured that gloves and aprons were worn during the nappy changing process and both child and staff hands were washed after nappy changing had taken place. The children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams were maintained in a clearly labelled storage area.
- Children's individual bed sheets were in use and were laundered weekly and more often if needed.
- All children's cot mattresses were waterproof with covers and were kept at over 50 centimetres apart.
- Lidded, foot pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste during the inspection.
- A system was in place for the appropriate storage and sterilisation of children's soothers.
- Open windows in the care rooms allowed fresh air to circulate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Administration of medication:

- On the day of inspection, the staff informed the inspector that one child had prescribed medication to be administered in the case of an emergency. The medication was stored safely and was accessible to the staff. Staff in the child's room were aware of the emergence response protocol.
- Children had individually labelled temperature reducing medicines and medications reviewed were observed to be in date and stored out of reach of the children.

Safe sleep:

- Staff were noted to maintain sleep records in relation to the children's colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals. The inspector reviewed 10 sleep records, and these were recorded correctly.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets were secured to the walls.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor area.

Outing:

- On discussion with the staff, the service has an outing yearly with a risk assessment completed prior to this occurring. On review of the risk assessment, a number of strategies were in place to mitigate identified risks to the children.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

- While it was acknowledged that Garda vetting had been renewed in respect of 10 adults, who worked at the service, the Garda vetting disclosures available for 2 adults, were not dated within the previous years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Safe sleep:

- The air temperature of two sleep rooms and two care rooms which was used for sleeping children aged between 1 year and 2 years 11 months was recorded at above 22.0°C while children were sleeping.

The following temperatures were recorded:

- Wobbler 1 sleep room was recorded at 25.3°C while four children were sleeping
- Wobbler 2 room was recorded at 25.4°C while four children were sleeping.
- Wobbler 2 sleep room was recorded at 25.3°C while one child was sleeping
- Toddler room was recorded at 25.6°C while two children were sleeping

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

This exceeds the recommended temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children of this age. It is acknowledged that staff remained with the children, opened the windows, closed the blinds and had numerous fans in use but temperatures were unable to be reduced to 22.0°C or below.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. One application had been submitted prior to the inspection. The second application is now submitted. The service has strengthened its monitoring systems providing advanced reminders of three months before expiry dates.

Safe sleep:

2. The service reviewed and strengthened its procedure for managing periods of adverse weather. An air conditioning unit was rented and all children availed of this during sleep periods. A review of the procedures was carried out and a risk assessment developed to guide further practices. An air conditioning unit will be rented in hot weather and risk assessments will be carried out; the service will close in the future if risk determines the need to.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Garda vetting for the two staff members was received. The services Garda vetting policy was also received.

Safe sleep:

2. Photographic evidence of the temperature recording of 20°C in the sleep area and a copy of the risk assessment received.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in the care room. The inspector was requested to signed in and out from the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

(1) Thirteen of the adults who worked with the children had completed First Aid Response (FAR) training, with copies of the corresponding certificates available. At least one of these adults was available to the children at all times, during the service's opening hours.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Records of monthly fire drills were maintained on file. It was noted that the most recent fire drill was carried out on 22 June 2026.
 - (b) A written list of the number and type of firefighting equipment was available. Maintenance records indicated that the firefighting equipment was serviced in November 2025 and the smoke alarm was tested on 23 June 2026.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in various locations throughout the premises.